

# The Alderton Infant School

Alderton Hall Lane, Loughton, Essex, IG10 3HE

**Inspection dates** 15–16 May 2013

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school.

- Experienced leaders and managers, including governors have made sure that the school has continued to improve since its last inspection.
- Regular checking and accurate measurement of the school's work ensures that teaching is good and pupils achieve well.
- When children start in the Reception classes they often have skills and knowledge that are below those typically found. They are given a good start and make good progress. By the time they leave at the end of Year 2 their attainment is above average.
- Timely interventions by teaching assistants result in pupils making good progress in small group sessions.
- Pupils behave well and show care and respect towards each other. They are well looked after and the school provides a safe and happy learning environment.
- A strong focus on developing the pupil's independence and creative skills in topic work makes a good contribution to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teaching is not consistently outstanding because teaching assistants are not always used effectively to accelerate pupils' progress in whole class lessons.
- Opportunities for pupils to investigate and solve problems are too infrequent.
- Marking in mathematics does not always help pupils to improve their work. They are not always given time to respond to guidance when it is provided.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited 20 lessons or part-lessons. All of the teachers were observed.
- Many of the lesson observations were shared with the headteacher. Short visits were made to observe the teaching of phonics (letters and the sounds they make), the quality of teaching in small groups, and also the quality of pupil's behaviour.
- Pupils' were heard read and work from each year group was looked at with the deputy headteacher.
- Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at a range of documents, including the school's self-evaluation and improvement plan, the school's records of monitoring, minutes of meetings of the governing body, and records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding.
- They met with different groups of pupils, interviewed a sample of staff, and spoke to parents. They also spoke to members of the governing body, a representative from the local authority, and a representative from the local consortium of schools.
- The views of parents were obtained through the school's surveys and the 43 responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View). Written comments from 28 members of staff were also considered.

## Inspection team

Brian Netto, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Kelly Stock

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- This is an average-sized school.
- Most pupils are from White British backgrounds.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is average. This includes pupils in the care of the local authority and pupils known to be eligible for free school meals.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs supported through school action is average.
- The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is also average.
- The school collaborates with a group of 19 other schools in a local consortium.
- The school shares the site with Sunrise Children’s Centre, New Beginnings Nursery, Barley Barn breakfast and after-school club, and The Alderton Junior School.
- Since the last inspection, an additional Reception class has been added. There have been several changes in staff, and also in the governing body, including a new Chair of Governors in November 2012.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of outstanding teaching so that more pupils make accelerated progress by:
  - making sure that teaching assistants more actively support individual pupils with timely interventions during whole class teaching
  - increasing opportunities for pupils to use and apply their investigative skills in mathematics in different topics
  - improving the quality of marking in mathematics so that pupils know what they have done well, what could be improved, and give them more chances to respond to the written guidance.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is good

- In 2012, attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 was above the national averages in reading, writing and mathematics. This represents good progress from pupils' low starting points.
- Children typically start in the Reception classes with skills and knowledge below those expected for their age. This is particularly the case in their language and social skills. Teachers provide a range of stimulating experiences which engage their attention and interest so they progress quickly.
- In a very effective lesson observed children used the story of Goldilocks as a starting point for various activities which encouraged them to consider the story from different perspectives. They were enabled to extend their language skills by skilful questioning as some mixed porridge in different quantities while others constructed beds of different sizes. They showed excellent understanding as they discussed the story, showing perseverance and resilience and were well supported in learning successfully.
- Improvements to the outdoor area mean that children have increased opportunities to build on their own interests as they play and learn together. This helps to accelerate their social skills development.
- Across the school pupils read confidently and with enjoyment, and make good use of their knowledge of phonics (the sounds that letters make) to help extend their writing skills.
- In Key Stage 1, boys and girls make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics. Occasionally, the support individuals receive in lessons from teaching assistants lacks focus and this impedes more rapid progress.
- Pupils develop their skills in calculation well. However, opportunities to promote investigation and problem solving skills are missed.
- Pupils funded through the pupil premium make the same good progress as their class mates. This is because their learning needs are regularly checked and small group work, with a close focus on specific skills, enables them to keep up well with the precise tasks they are set. The gap in attainment seen in 2012 in writing is closing due to the school's well-chosen improvement strategies.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make good progress. Their needs are quickly and accurately identified. Effective support is then provided in class, or in small groups. Work is well matched to their needs and interests, and good support is provided by external agencies such as speech-and-language therapists.

### The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is good and some is outstanding, especially in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Expectations are high, work is set at just the right level and good relationships ensure that pupils achieve well.
- Pupils are given regular opportunities that develop their speaking and listening skills. Effective questioning by skilled teachers and other adults makes sure that pupils' responses are well considered. For example, following a visit to a local church, pupils in Year 2 were able to recall important new words such as 'font' which they used in a good discussion about their experience.
- Teachers and other adults are well trained in teaching pupils sound and letter recognition. Consistent teaching in each year ensures that pupils very quickly learn to read with confidence, and develop skills to self-correct, especially when spelling unfamiliar words. Pupils are supported well in small groups and make good and sometimes rapid progress as a result.
- Pupils in Year 1 made good progress as they wrote letters and postcards to a nineteenth century character, comparing their experiences of going on holiday. This was because they were given

clear guidance on how to write a letter, and made good use of resources such as dictionaries, to extend their vocabulary.

- Pupils are given activities which help them to practice and build their numeracy skills. For example, Year 1 pupils made good progress in solving money problems through well targeted questioning, which helped them explore misconceptions. However, opportunities for pupils to apply their investigative skills across the subjects they study are sometimes missed.
- Pupils benefit from skilled teaching in small groups. Careful tracking of their progress helps teachers and teaching assistants plan work that moves their learning forward. Well targeted support ensures that those who are more able as well as those who find learning difficult, including those with special educational needs make good progress. Occasionally, when classes are taught as a whole group, teaching assistants are not well enough deployed to support pupils' learning.
- Marking and feedback is very thorough, especially in writing books. Pupils are given clear guidance on what they do well and what they need to do to improve their work. This is not always the case in marking in mathematics. Additionally, pupils are not given enough chances to improve their work in mathematics.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils** are good

- Pupils have good attitudes towards learning, and respond well to adults' high expectations of their behaviour. They co-operate well in groups, and play well together. Their skills in working on their own develop quickly as they get older.
- The school is orderly and calm, and pupils' behaviour at lunchtime and around the school is often exemplary.
- Pupils say that the school does everything it can to keep them safe, and they readily turn to adults for help if they need it. As one said, 'I like the teachers because they are kind and helpful and keep us safe'. They have an excellent understanding of how to keep safe when using computers, and have a good knowledge of road safety.
- Pupils know what bullying is and say that it rarely happens. Parents agree this to be true. This is also confirmed by school records which show that behaviour is typically good. There have been no exclusions and only rare instances of racism. This reflects the school's strong commitment to equality of opportunity, which makes sure that there is no discrimination of any kind.
- Pupils who find it difficult to behave well at all times are provided with skilful support. The school's provision has been strengthened by training for staff and through the use of other agencies such as educational psychologists.
- Pupils are taught to think of others and help others as part of the 'golden' behaviour rules.
- Pupils in the 'Tuesday Club' act as the voice of their peers. They regularly meet to talk about how the school can be even better.
- Pupils enjoy coming to school. The school has worked hard with a small number of families where attendance has dipped. Overall, it is in line with the national average for primary schools.

### **The leadership and management** are good

- The school is well led by the experienced headteacher. She is ably supported by the senior team and the rest of the staff, most of whom have management responsibilities. Along with governors, they have secured improvements in all areas identified by the previous inspection.
- The school has an accurate knowledge of its strengths and weaknesses. Regular checks on learning and careful tracking of how well the pupils are doing enable the school to plan effective

next steps in learning. All staff are held accountable for the pupils' progress. Arrangements for checking teachers' performance and effectiveness are robust and are closely linked to the awarding of extra responsibilities.

- Good partnerships with other schools within the consortium help the school to raise its expectations and this ensures that pupils are helped to do their best. Staff give their full support to ensuring all pupils' maximise their achievement. One member of staff's view reflects those of the whole school, 'I am very lucky to work in an environment where all staff support each other and work as a whole team to ensure that everyone works to the best of their ability'.
- The partnerships provide frequent training opportunities for staff and governors. As a group they commission external support, and this ensures that the curriculum reflects the needs of the school community. Pupils with special educational needs and those who require extra help have equal opportunity to be as successful as other pupils.
- Full use is made of the extensive grounds, which include an overgrown garden for exploring the insect world and an area used by the pupils to grow plants. Alongside regular visits and specialist teaching in music and sport, the school provides a broad range of learning experiences. This makes a good contribution to the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Parents are very happy with the school. They agree that teaching is good and that the school is well led and managed. They would unanimously recommend the school to others.
- The local authority provides a 'light touch' approach to the school. Support is commissioned as need arises, such as when they meet with other local schools to compare their assessments of the pupils' progress.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Governors use their experience to assist the various transitions which the pupils experience, such as between the local nursery and the adjacent junior school. They are kept well informed about how finances are spent by the consortium's business manager. This includes the impact that the pupil premium fund has on helping pupils make good progress. This is reviewed termly by the governors. Money is spent wisely on further training and targeting pupils' specific needs especially in small group work, so that for example reading levels have quickly risen. They keep check on the quality of teaching and reward good teaching as well as tackling any underperformance. Training through the consortium ensures that they are kept up to date with information about how pupils compare in their attainment with national patterns. Governors make sure that statutory requirements in respect of safeguarding are met.

## What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	114864
<b>Local authority</b>	Essex
<b>Inspection number</b>	412600
<b>Type of school</b>	Infant
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–7
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	200
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Rebecca Fricker
<b>Headteacher</b>	Sharon Dalby
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	15 June 2010
<b>Telephone number</b>	02085 087168
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